

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the President will be notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

AMERICA COMPETES ACT— Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 929

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 929 offered by the Senator from South Carolina, Mr. DEMINT. Who yields time?

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I know Senator BAUCUS intended to be here. I don't see him right now. I know the Senator from South Carolina wishes to use his 1 minute. I am informed that Senator BAUCUS will support the amendment and is urging other Senators to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I appreciate the support of the majority. This is clearly a bipartisan idea. The underlying bill has in it a study to look at obstacles to innovation. This simply adds to that with a study of our Tax Code to see how it might be obstructing innovation and investment in our country.

It sounds as if we have good support. I encourage all my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to vote for the amendment.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 929. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 137 Leg.]

YEAS—96

Akaka	Dole	McCaskill
Alexander	Domenici	McConnell
Allard	Dorgan	Menendez
Baucus	Durbin	Mikulski
Bayh	Ensign	Murkowski
Bennett	Enzi	Murray
Biden	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Bond	Graham	Pryor
Boxer	Grassley	Reed
Brown	Gregg	Reid
Brownback	Hagel	Roberts
Bunning	Harkin	Rockefeller
Burr	Hatch	Salazar
Byrd	Hutchison	Sanders
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schumer
Cardin	Inouye	Sessions
Carper	Isakson	Shelby
Casey	Kennedy	Smith
Chambliss	Kerry	Snowe
Clinton	Klobuchar	Specter
Coburn	Kohl	Stabenow
Cochran	Kyl	Stevens
Coleman	Landrieu	Sununu
Collins	Lautenberg	Tester
Conrad	Leahy	Thomas
Corker	Levin	Thune
Cornyn	Lieberman	Vitter
Craig	Lincoln	Warner
Crapo	Lott	Webb
DeMint	Lugar	Whitehouse
Dodd	Martinez	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Johnson	Obama
McCain	Voinovich

The amendment (No. 929) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, as I understand it, we are operating under a time agreement that has been proposed by the Senate leaders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for such time as he wishes to consume.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, first of all, I commend my friend and colleague, Senator BINGAMAN, as well as Senator ALEXANDER and the group that came together in support of this idea of competitiveness legislation. I think it is one of the most important issues we will consider on the floor of the Senate, and it is something that commands the kind of broad support that it is getting.

What underlines this legislation is a recognition that the United States is competing in a global economy. If we are going to compete in a global economy, we have to make a decision as a nation to the prepare each and every individual American to stand with the winds in a global economy. This legislation says that we are going to equip every man, woman, and child in the United States to be able to deal with the challenges of a global economy, and I think that is a very important national purpose.

Throughout history, this country, when it saw that it was challenged, turned to education to stay competitive. After the Second World War, we needed to build a new, peacetime economy. We passed the G.I. Bill to enable those who served in battle to rebuild their lives at home. For every dollar we invested, the Greatest Generation returned \$7 to our economic growth.

In 1957, we were challenged again. The launch of Sputnik sparked the

Space Age, and we rose to the challenge by passing the National Defense Education Act and inspiring the nation to ensure that the first footprint on the moon was left by an American. We doubled the Federal investment in education. When individuals have their skills uplifted and when they have their skills enhanced, they find out their participation in the economy works a great deal better. They are more productive, they are more useful, they are more creative and more imaginative and able to compete more effectively. This bill is enormously important for all Americans and very important for our country in terms of the whole challenge of globalization.

Secondly, it is enormously important in terms of our national security. This legislation ensures that we are going to encourage those forces that enhance our capability in the areas of math, science and research—all of which are enormously important to make sure we are going to have the best technology for those who are going to serve in the Armed Forces. In the Armed Forces we want the best trained and best led men and women, but we also want the best in technology. This is a competitiveness bill and a national security bill.

I believe it is going to be enormously helpful and valuable in terms of our democratic institutions, in making sure we are going to have men and women in this country who have the ability and commitment to ensure that our democratic institutions are going to function, and function very well, and that we will be able to maintain our leadership in the world.

I, for one, agree with those who believe in each generation, and in each decade, the United States has to fight for its leadership in the world. It is not just going to come automatically. We should no longer think we are going to coast in terms of national and world leadership. We have to win it, and we have to win it every single day. The way to win it is with the kinds of investments that are included in this legislation. So I commend all those who have been a part of this process, and particularly our friends and colleagues, Senator BINGAMAN and Senator ALEXANDER.

To go through very quickly now, after those general comments about why this legislation is so important, if we look at where the United States is: America's 15-year-olds scored below the average in math compared to the youth of other developed nations on a recent international assessment. On the Programme for International Student Assessment, you will see that the U.S. ranks 24th.

This chart indicates that since 1975, the U.S. has dropped from 3rd to 15th place in the production of scientists and engineers.

We are also losing ground in overall high school and college graduation rates. The U.S. has dropped below that average graduation rate for OECD countries. Out of 24 nations, the U.S. ranks 14th, just ahead of Portugal.